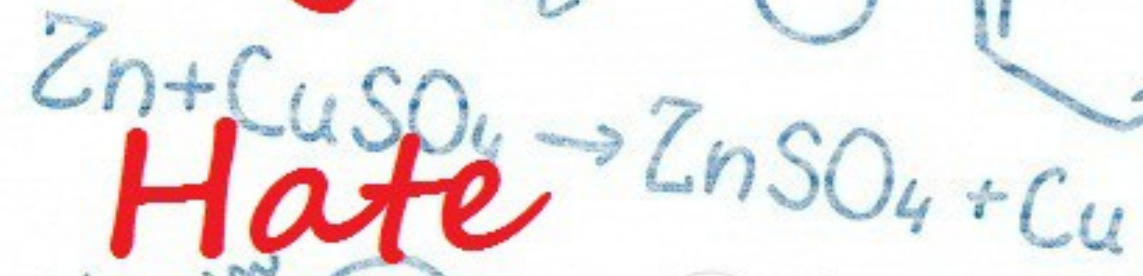


Titanium

Helium



Why Do I

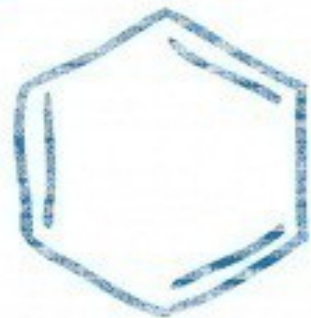
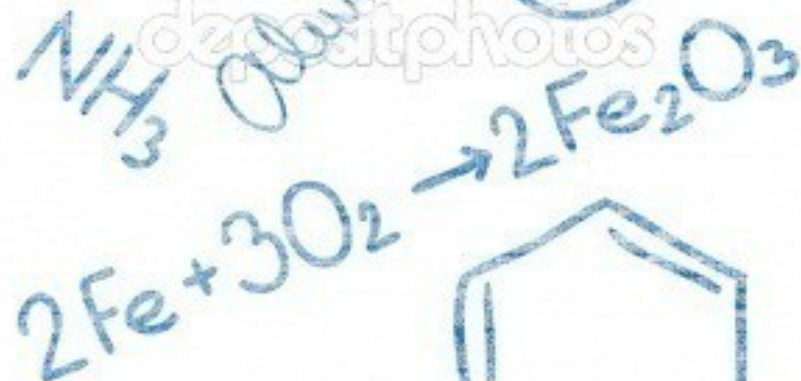


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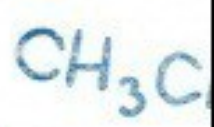
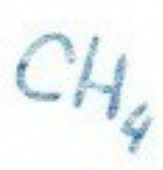
Chemistry



Aluminium



Chlorine



Disclaimer

The characters introduced in the story are purely fictional. Nobody have any relation with the characters in any way. If you feel any similarity with a person who is alive or dead- I'm not responsible. And if you find the strong similarity even after reading the whole story, don't let that go out of your mind. This is just a story. Not a story based on true events. If only you can read this as though it is completely fictional, then only take the risk of reading this. No further queries will be answered.

-Arjun R Krishanan

FOREWORD

First of all it is important to inform you that this story has nothing to do with Chemistry or related craps. This is just a story or say, an elaborated description of several hours of a day of my life. The idea of writing this first came to me when I became fed up of studying Chemistry. It was important to find something interesting to kill the boredom. So I found this job interesting and went on. Love and Chemistry does not match. However, it was the damn subject Chemistry which gave me the spark. That's why I named the story as '**Why Do I Hate Chemistry**' to show my gratitude towards Chemistry.

My friends were the greatest support I got. That really helped me to finish things off well. They were the oxygen that helped the spark to form the fire. So thanks buddies. I've to say special thanks to '*Justin Beiber*', '*Backstreet Boys*' and '*Chris Brown*' who helped me to improve my language and also gave my heart the divine touch of love.

There were many errors when I completed writing the story. So I gotta say thanks to those who rectified the errors- friend and teachers.

And moreover that, it was the beautiful smile that urged me to write the whole thing. It was the fuel that kept the fire so high up in the air. So a very special thanks to the owner of that mystifying smile.

Thanks for all giving me the urge. I'm dedicating this story to all Chemistry haters. Thanks Chemistry. And Chemistry sucks.

Why Do I Hate Chemistry?

The narrow cool drinks shop wasn't enough to carry us all. At least 60% of the students who had appeared the god damn NTSE at that weather beaten school were present there for finding something cool in that hot-dry air of September. The morning session was Mathematics and Logics Examination. The Logics question paper was completely out of logic for me. A bunch of number sequences and a vast area of logical patterns which made no sense to me were waiting for me to fill in. The QP was 19 pages long with 90 damn questions. But -for me- it was all very simple, didn't take more than 25 minutes to complete the exam since there was nothing to do much rather than darken one of the small boxes in each row with your ball point pen. And, mine was Cello Pin-point with some easy ink flow crap – which made the job lots more easier.

And once again when I'm out of the unbearably hot examination hall and the invigilator's piercing looks, I was standing there, beside the cool-drinks shop which offered me barely enough space to step my foot in. I should have hated that hot September day if we couldn't be there right in front of the shop. By we, I mean me and my physics teacher's pretty daughter Aswathy- Beautiful as her mother. But what about her father? I don't know. I didn't had a really good chance to have a look at his face. He was in Qatar or something. But I know one fact, the product will be more attractive if the ingredients are very much good enough. That's all I know. However she inherited most of the characteristics that her mother had. The beautiful pretty face, especially the smile that brings her beauty one level up were- I think- exact copy of her mother's. And the mole in her attractive narrow nose was undoubtedly like the one my physics teacher had in her left cheek. It was displaced a bit in her daughter. But however the hair was different. The waist long thick black hair was her own property. Her sister Arathy also had this type of hair. Sangeetha madam- that's her name- had a short and unattractive hair unlike her kids. Then it must be her dad's- I thought.(But after some weeks I came to know that he is half bald). But I don't care, she's got the thing. Man, God has created each and every girl in the world with unique 'something'. Her pretty silent smile and the thick black hair? May be that

'something'. Thank god.

She was not that much studious girl. But of course she was good at studies- was there in the class's top ten list almost in every exam. (But I'm more advanced in studies- I was one of the top ten 3 students of the class. But that's not important here). Aswathy was a good classmate or say, a good friend of mine till that very day. The day of disaster and the boon. The disaster was- of course- the NTSE exam. And the boon? That's what I'm about to write.

I said we were good friends. But what made this change was the school or precisely the cool drinks shop in front of the school. We- i.e. me and Aswathy were in one room for the examination. There were other candidates too. Please don't think too far. Our room was on the far right side of the 1st floor. When I entered I think I saw 2 familiar faces. My classmates- Milan and Susanth. Milan was my good friend while the other- Susanth was the most irritating person on the class- I don't like him. His soda glass spectacles were the most damn thing I ever came across in my life. I would break that stupid thing into pieces if I get chance. But however it did increase the stupidity of his pig like face. I don't want to make this note ugly by describing what he look like. Let your imagination work on it. But please don't think about anything like Shah Rukh or Amir.

As I entered the room he waved a hand at me and smiled- if you can call it a smile. However I returned the smile- my manners. My heart pounded as I saw a vacant seat right beside him. My poor heart should've moved a little bit down through the narrow gap between my lungs in the thought of writing an examination with him. How on earth am I going to survive an hour sitting beside him? That thought really really annoyed me. But with a sudden burst of relief I found out my seat. In the front row- I always hated the front row- but not this time. Anyway Susanth was on 5th row or something. My heart leapt with joy on losing his companionship which I least wished for. I looked at his face as if he was at an infinite distance from me. And it was as ugly as ever.

But suddenly I saw his face moving. Actually that crap was coming towards me- at light's speed 3×10^8 m/s. He had a book on his right hand that can be used as a pillow. I don't know how on earth that pig carried this pillow like book this far. The single book could weight more than my tiffin box.

“Hi.” he said as he came closer to me and without letting me to gently move aside to

leave a place for him to sit he pushed me to the middle of the bunch and found his place on the edge. It was like a huge meteor landing on my very chest- even though there wasn't enough space for it. I returned a 'hi' without any sign of interest.

“How's it going? The preparation.” he asked

“Well...good I think. But I'm not sure about this. I think the exam is going to be tough.” I replied.

“Tough means interesting. I really like them.”

That is Susanth. He was the only student on our class who wanted it all tough. Something might've dropped on his pumpkin like head. But the fact is- as far as I know- he was good at this type of exams than me. I can remember the exam we last appeared together. It was some god damn maths quiz. And I- just for fun- copied some of his results. He was very confident with his answers and didn't move a limb to stop me from copying his paper. But when the result came, he got 13 in 30 while I got a golden egg! I didn't really expect that shit. For the first time on my life I got shame on showing my results to others. Yet, I've answered 7 questions correctly while 14 went wrong. And the sum was zero. I hate the negative marking system and-of course- the idiot who had given me the β -version of his paper while he debugged it to make his α -version.

“Abhinav, I have a doubt regarding Fibonacci series.” he said breaking my thoughts.

'Screw your Fibonacci series.' I said under my lips and asked loudly and clearly- “What's it?”

“Fibonacci series start with one or zero?”

Fibonacci series was one of my favourite during the maths lesson. That one was an interesting series, one term is the sum of its trailing 2 terms. It can start with one- 1,1,2,3,5... and also with zero- 0,1,1,2,3,5,.... Which one is the real one? The question seemed pretty much confusing- especially when I'm about to appear for an exam which included all these stuff.

“I think it starts with zero.” I said without looking at the two balls that he called his eyes. And those were barely visible through that opaque soda glass spectacle. Then came the next question: “Are you sure?”

'Am I sure? Why can't you find out the answer yourself? Don't you find the answer even after eating the 1 foot thick reference book?' All these questions came to me instantly. But

you know I was in the examination hall- I should keep manners. So I silently nodded. It was not the end-just beginning. The tsunami was yet to come. He asked about some craps about the Boolean Algebra which I have little knowledge to answer. And then came more fuss named as complex numbers, matrices and some more dark corner's of mathematics which was out of my eyesight at that time. I simply answered- 'I don't know' to all his questions. The only thing I answered was his first question. But unfortunately that was, indeed true. I would've given him the other answer if I knew the correct answer that time.

It took ages to return that moron to his damn seat. I didn't shout like- 'GET YOUR ASS OUT OF MY BENCH NOW' or anything but he simply retired from the job of asking me questions uselessly and hearing the same answer – 'I don't know' over and over again. When he returned to his seat it was a great relief. The tornado was over.

I wanted to focus my eyes on something other than Susanth's stupid face. So I turned to Milan. But he was- as always- minding his own business, Preparing his brain for the exam. He is that type of student- studious, especially when his ass is on fire. I turned and took a glance over everybody and saw everyone except me was struggling with questions. And I have locked the answer then itself that I didn't deserve the scholarship.

Here's an addition. I don't really wanted to add this part to my note being it is really really unimportant. The thing is that there was a handsome young boy sitting in the second row, right behind me.(Actually I didn't even noticed a boy sitting there!). His name now-I know- is Ajith, my classmate of the higher secondary days. This is all irrelevant. But respecting his request I have just increased the length of my note by a few lines.(Friends, forgive me for calling him 'handsome young boy'. Respecting his request, you know.

The exam would start at 9.30 am. The minute dial of my foreign watch(china made) seemed to be moving extremely slow. Not literally, but actually it was moving slow. Life span of the button cell was too small.

At 8.45am in my watch- actually it was two or three minutes before 9.30- I felt a release in stress as a gorgeous good looking girl with a sweet smile on her lips entered the room. It was yes, Aswathy- beautiful as ever. She was-as I can remember- in a costly looking beautiful blue coloured churidar with the designs of white flowers on it. She looked very much pretty on that blue dress. Recently I studied that our eyes are more sensitive to blue than any

other colour. May be that could be the reason that my eyes stuck up with her? She waved a hand and sent a 'hi' at me as she passed me at the front bench. I could feel the air inside the room following her as she walked to her seat on the third row. The reason-now I know-Bernoulli's theorem. When velocity increases pressure decreases, The air flows from denser to rarer space, all that crap. However the air had a sweet fragrance. The aroma of Jasmine. May be Yardley London's perfume. Her father might have send those thing from Qatar. Or can it be her natural? Pretty hard to believe. Whatever the case is, the smell I like most in the world is the sweet lovely fragrance of the little white flowers.

She was nervous- I guessed from her shivering hands and anxious glances at the door. Her eyes were travelling from the 6.5 feet tall door to the pages of a thick book she placed on her table. Somehow her eyes met mine. And within a fraction of second that pretty smile spread on her lips. Oh man...I should've forgotten about all these NTSE crap in that smile if the cool drinks thing had happened in the morning. That smile always mesmerises me. I think she is a witch. A powerful spell is working on her smile.

I asked her about the preparation, but the reply wasn't positive, as usual. But this wasn't purely believable. Because I know there are some people who can say and act differently. Even if their reply is negative the result may not be so much negative. She was that kind of girl. And my friend think me too a member of this category. That's why even if I say 'I'm not prepared' they wont believe it.

However I didn't get the chance to ask her about anything much. She was busy on her last minute exam rush. In the next two minutes, several times I looked back at her and got nothing in reply but the curious looks of Susanth who was sitting just one seat behind her. Heart lighting figure of Aswathy on the foreground and the faded dirty picture of Susanth on the background. What a pitiful combination! Beauty and the beast. That rhymes, yes!

The rush hour -not for me- came to an end when a ball shaped fat figure appeared suddenly at the doorway. The entrance to the room was approximately 3 foot in width, and at the first glance I felt that the new comer has got 2 or 3 inches more. I couldn't wait to see how he is going to squeeze through the narrow threshold. But however this didn't happen. My approximation gone a little bit wrong. He was actually one inch thinner than the door. I noticed his resemblance with the thanchavoor doll. A sudden urge to laugh surfaced in me at the sight

of his bald egg shaped head. His bald head was gleaming like a 15W incandescent bulb in the reflection of the shining sun. I've heard the proverb. No mirror is needed if one's friend is good enough. And I'm sure he- to be precise, his bald plate- will be the best mirror for his mates.

We all stood up at once and wished him good morning as he entered the room and placed the bindle of QP and OMR sheets on the centuries old table. His eyes swept over all the dark corners and the message carrying walls which have not been felt the smell of fresh paint for decades. His expression changed to disgust. I bet he is not a teacher of a Government school. All these craps, the dirty walls which carries thousands of writing, mostly foul words or '____ LOVE____' thing etc., the ancient furniture which is kept as a memorial for the thousands of students who had passed out from the school, the scratchings in the desk, everything is same for every Government schools-(I'm not sure whether there's an exception.) What is the difference here? The only reason which can give satisfactory explanation to the change in expression of the Humpty-Dumpty was that he had never been in a Government school before.

The next 15 minutes was the instruction to the candidates on how to fill the answer sheet and how to behave gently on an examination. We could've filled the details without his help. But however we eagerly waited for his words. It didn't take more time to fill the details. The only confusion was that regarding my signature. I wasn't thorough with my own signature. Every time I sign it will be very much different from others. I feared whether there is a need to add my signature close to close in one same paper. But- thank god- this didn't happen.

Meanwhile I heard Aswathy asking a silly doubt regarding her caste to the bull's eyed man in her sweet voice. But the answer wasn't too sweet. How on earth that man could shout at her when she is asking something in that soft misty tone and yes, with that beautiful smile on her face? I should've shouted 'How dare you speak to my girl friend like this?'. But that wasn't the time. However he managed to give us the QP and answer sheets barely a few seconds before the bell laughed at us saying 'The exam is started'.

I don't actually know how that hour flew away so quickly. The QP was indeed tough. I barely understood anything on the first few pages. By god's grace, the questions softened a bit at the tail. It was the chance to implement our two months of preparation. As I told you before I haven't got anything to do with it as the chance is for those who prepared. At Most of the

seconds in the 3600 seconds long hour, my mind was something rather than the damn questions. I have noticed something peculiar in my roll number. I used much time to work on it. And watching the enormous bald pate of my invigilator gleaming in the sunlight was a perfect time pass. 3 or 4 times I saw he walking around me and flying a glance at my answer paper. He might've guessed that either I'm an extremely intelligent person or a fellow who had came this way not to attend the exam but to capture some pretty figures.

The last five minutes were again a rush. Even though I hadn't got anything to check, I joined the spirit of the whole class. But I think I got the answers of some more questions in that 5 little minutes. And naturally an eagerness to answer more raised on me on that last 5 god damn minutes. Why the hell did my brain take too long to respond? Shit! It was badly late then. I didn't even noticed the bell ranging for us to get out of that screwed examination hall. Without letting me to show my brilliance, the fat hooded figure appeared in front of me and snatching the OMR sheet from my eager hands he joined mine on to the bundle of answer papers he had held in his hand. As you know, The first shit part of NTSE ended all in a mess. I could've performed well- I regret now. But actually, the best part was yet to come.

Even though I was least wishing to find a place in NTSE's top ten list, I felt a little regret on wasting a good chance. That was indeed true, I wasted it. As everyone say, we will get chances only once in our lifetime. So we've to catch it when it is right in front of our eyes, don't regret about the wasted chances. Ah! Now it is very much easy to write. But not practicable when its under such situations- especially after the tremendous demolition of NTSE exam. It's all theory man, practical side is weak.

Susanth was the first one to complete the exam and come out of the hall. He flew out of the room like a comet. When he got out I was just reading the 75th question of my 90 questions long QP. I feared whether he would wait for me outside. But- thank god- he was not in my eyesight when-at last-I got out of that god damn exam hall. He might've moved his butt to some lonely dark corners of the school to prepare for the next exam which was Chemistry.

However I didn't want to stay my foots on the uneven veranda, so I simply retraced my path to the medium sized banyan tree near the entrance, where my mom and a lady -which I knew very much-were standing.

As I was reducing my gravitational potential energy a sweet soft voice made me exert a

force against the gravitational pull of earth. Even without turning I could guess who it was, and then only I identified my mistake. I should've waited for her. Even for a several seconds I completely forgot about that pretty smile! How on earth it could happen? I think the 'Logics' exam did really made my logics chaos. Screw the exam.

She descended the step towards me with the black and white coloured bag on her left shoulder and the 19 pages thick QP on her right hand. She was holding the paper tightly as though she was crushing an aluminium soda can. I knew-with just a glance- that her expression was not at all friendly. I smiled, but didn't get any in return. She was in a bad mood, Yes.

“Oh, this is really really bad.” she said as we started to move towards the banyan tree. She said bad. Why? I thought. I didn't really done anything. Anything at all. But why?

“Bad? What, The exam?” I asked.

“What else do you think?” she replied looking desperately at the happy figures around her.

But however I felt a little bit relief on hearing this. I was not the only one to be disappointed about the exam. But you know, there is a huge gap between the disappointment of one who had not done anything much to face the exam and the one who fails to get into the questions after the die hard preparation for this single damn thing. This is the main reason why I prefer to write Chemistry exam without much preparation.

“So the exam was tough. Yes?”

“Very much. It was all...bad stuff.”

I noticed a 3 second delay between 'all' and 'bad'. She might've swallowed some foul words. That's quite natural. Good girls do not speak anything bad when she is with some one. Especially when it is a boy of same age.

“What about you Abhi?” she asked “Answered everything correctly. Aren't you?”

“Me? Are you joking? I didn't understand a single word of it. Stupid question paper.”

“But I thought you could answer it. You are the class top. You know.”

'Fry the class top. This exam is for the real toppers, not for the 'class' toppers.' I said to myself. But words didn't come out like this. It was a little bit polished.

“But this is a national level examination. Too tough for an ordinary class topper. I don't

really stand a chance.” I said trying to be sound like more desperate.

“But you are not ordinary.” she said.

I turned to look at her. She wasn't looking at me but the two figures watching us eagerly from under the banyan tree. She waved a hand at the lady who was standing right beside my mother. And the lady was my Physics teacher, moreover that Aswathy's mom sangeetha madam. Her velocity increased as we moved closer to them. They might've guessed how the exam was, from Aswathy's natural despair and my manufactured sadness. She moved faster towards her mom while I slowed down to think about the last few words that came out of Aswathy's beautiful lips. 'You're not ordinary'. It sounded a little bit odd. That means 'You're special'. Oh! That changes meaning. If she had really intended to say "You're special" why don't she do it straight? What she really meant? I am 'special' or just 'ordinary'? I don't know. But however the puzzle of words really confused me more than any question in the 19 pages thick QP.

“How was the exam?” my mom asked eagerly as I moved closer to her.

“Good...but not so good.” I answered without showing slightest bit of interest.

“Was it tough?” came the next question. This time from my Physics teacher. I wanted to explain how much difficult it was to get into the correct meaning of each question. But I simply nodded.

“Aswathy said it was very much hard for her. I thought you could do better. Is there any chance, Abhinav?”

“Well... I don't know actually. The exam was tough. But if everyone loses mark like me...yes I have chance.” I said, completely aware of how far is the statement I had just made from the truth.

“Milan is here. Yes?” asked my mom.

“Yes.” I said “He was on our room. Exam was too much difficult to him also.” I answered the question that was supposed to ask in advance.

We talked for 5 more minutes. Completely about the exam, questions, expected marks, feedback from others etc. However the direction of the discussion changed from the screwed exam to the completely necessary topic-hunger-as Aswathy accidentally mentioned something about food.

“Mom, I'm hungry.” I said as the thought of food- more accurately the picture of colourful picture of chicken roast-came to mind. I perfectly knew that it was not such a situation to get a bite of chicken thigh. But however the first thing came to my mind as I heard the word 'food' was this.

“Is this the time for your lunch?” my mom asked glancing at her golden coloured watch.

That wasn't really the time of my lunch. It was only 5 past level. Which means 1 and a half hour early. I don't know what made me hungry. May be that god damn questions should've sucked up all the food particles in my digestive system.

“What's the next exam?” Sangeetha madam asked. I wasn't sure whether the question was intended for me or her daughter. However the answer should be same. So I answered before Aswathy's beautiful lips even started to move.

“Chemistry and Bio.” I said trying deliberately not to show my lack of interest on those things.

“You're weak in Chemistry, I know.” said my teacher.

I simply nodded while Aswathy said -“Me too.”. That was a supporting hand. I'm not the only person who is weak in Chemistry. And now I know there are loads of people who really hate Chemistry. And of course, I'm one of them.

However I was weak in chemistry then- not a hater. So my mother released the order:

“It's not the time for lunch. Go and prepare for the next exam.”

Since there was my Physics teacher standing beside me watching my actions, I didn't take the risk to argue. Or how on earth a mother can give the order to study 'Chemistry' to her son?

After some minutes I was starting to leave and dive into mysteries of Chemistry. Chemistry, my most hated subject on the study. Sometimes it feels a little bit interesting while any other time utter boring. Especially Organic Chemistry, the Benzene ring, Carbon-Carbon, double, triple bonds, primary, secondary, tertiary cations and tonnes of reactions and miles long chemical equations. Screw the subject. I haven't even studied to draw a perfect hexagon yet. This is all real crap. And I was about to dive into the deeps without even a scuba.

But at the last moment came the sweet girlish voice.

“Can you help Aswathy, Abhinav? At least in Biology. I'm a bit busy right now.”

It was not an easy job to say who was the sender of those high pitched wave fronts- mother or daughter. Both are- I think- almost the same. When I identified the waves as her mother's there came the waves from the other side.

“Abhi, can you please?” asked Aswathy.

This was the question I most wanted to answer at that moment. Because it was the only hope I've left to survive the Tsunami waves of Chemistry. The answer was instantaneous.

“Of course. Its my pleasure.” I said, heart silently leaping with joy.

That was the big deal and my next mission was to find a good place to study- in her terms. But what I was looking for was a better place to hide from my mother's eyes and have a nice conversation with my companion. Almost every room in the school were carrying 2 or 3 studious students. I didn't check out all the rooms, but it seemed it is completely filled. So as to find a place out of my mom's eyes, we went to a narrow, greenhouse effected classroom at the other end of the corridor.

As we walked towards the classroom I saw many heads turning to look at me. Or- I'm sorry- it may be her, not me. Beauty always attracts eyes. Right? However I didn't bother to glance at anyone. I was in the fear of having another face to face with that moron- Susanth.

We found our place on the one and only fresh bench without any fracture on it in the middle row. I sat opposite to Aswathy and smiled. Then came the conjuring bright smile from her. It was like putting an expensive A/C on the dry hot air of September. As I watched her curved lips I saw the smile fading and moving in an inordered manner. Without a delay there came her sweet birdlike sound; but this time with some different tone.

“I think I heard you saying the exam wasn't too much tough for you.” she said.

“I never said that. The exam was indeed tough.”

“But you said you have chance for winning this- to my mother.”

The first answer came to my mind was:

'How on earth am I supposed to say I'm damnably screwed in this exam to my Physics teacher, after scooting from her class for the last two weeks in the name of this whole damn NTSE crap.'

But however I returned a softened answer:

“Yes. But that wasn't like that. I have chance only if everyone else is fooler than me. Which is-you know-not going to happen in this century. After all it was my Physics teacher. Yes? I cannot say I'm failed in the exam.”

Meanwhile she had already taken out the 2 inch thick reference book and was flipping the pages so fast to reach the chemistry part.

“I don't like those who speaks untruth.” she made a comment and her head sank down into the middle quality pages of the book. But I felt the comment was a little bit dramatic. She could've simply said 'I don't like liars.' But why didn't she? What was the reason for her hesitation to call me liar? I don't know.

However spend one and a half hour without speaking anything rather than the god-damn Chemistry was a tiring task for me. I have to say, she was a little too much concentrated in studying which I was least interested in. Whenever I made an attempt to get our conversation beyond the scopes of Chem or Bio she discouraged me and simply fell down to the book. Meanwhile, two more boys joined us on our room. But no use. They were all Milan type boys, asses on fire.

I don't know how I managed to survive the hour without speaking too much and most badly, concentrating on organic chemistry crap. Chemistry is like a huge, enormous castle with extra large entrance and narrow doorways. The heavy dark dungeons of chemical reactions, confusing labyrinth of organic compounds infinitely long corridors that leads us to nowhere. Yes, Chemistry is a castle. A god-damn cursed castle. I understood from that single hour.

I had to get out of the castle as I heard the call of hunger from a far distant place out of the four sky high walls. But actually the call was from my inside-precisely-stomach. I looked at my watch and saw the minute needle making an angle 165° with the hour needle. No doubt, it was time for lunch, 12:35 pm. I had hardly seen my watch's dial moving during the silent hour. For the best part of my relief it was advanced one and a half hour. It was indeed hard to believe that it was only 1 hour and 30 minutes since we had started our lonely voyage to the castle of Chemistry. It took ages, literally. But surely, it looked like longer than the midsummer vacation.

I snarled as the Hydrochloric acid inside my stomach has started its action. Aswathy, too turned and looked at me. It was the first time in the past 1 hour she seemed like really

deviating from the study load. May be she too might've heard the call of hunger. I can assure you that she had nothing in her mind for the past 90 minutes, rather than the balanced chemical equations and the cursed IUPAC naming procedure. The hour was really useful for her. And for me...you can guess- How on earth a boy can study something which he is little interested while a pretty young girl with a 916 smile sits right next to him? Even if she is not looking at him.

“Shall we finish the lunch? I think I'm hungry.” she asked at once.

It was like a chilling snow fall. After one hour of irritating silence, the first thing originated from her sweet vocal chord was actually the one I was dying to hear

“Of course. I was about to ask you the same.”

We got up at once and walked towards the half broken, suffered row of taps. When I opened the tap, the result was not welcoming. It made a few uneven noises before the two drops of Orange juice coloured water fell on my palm. I looked at Aswathy and saw her laughing at me. From the tap she turned 180°. I saw the laminar flow of water. Pure and clear water, like the one we usually see in swimming pools.(Pure like tear is an old usage. Be modern). I told you she's a witch, a beautiful mystifying witch. She moved aside to let me wash my hands in the laminar flow. Surely the Reynold's number was less than 1000, I studied in +1.

The lunch hour was too quick. It wasn't like eating food with friends. This time totally different. I don't know what happened. There was so much stuff to fill in the gap between food intake. But I don't know why, nothing came out of my mouth. May be I was starting to think that she is not my friend, I mean-more than a friend. Aswathy's side was also silent than she usually was. The natural disability to bear the silence for a long time is definitely fused with every girl in the world. Even 'Mullapperiyaar' is not fit enough to hold this much strain. So eventually, came some comments from her side, mostly about the exam. Being a boy it wasn't too much hard to hold on my words for sometime. So I simply concentrated on my food.

Brinjal was the vegetable my mom opted to accompany the rice pudding on the voyage from my tiffin box to the septic tank. And most worstly Brinjal was one of the members of my dislike club. Aswathy had Ladies finger for the food which too was on the same club. On the school I usually exchanges my dish with Rahul. I don't have the faintest idea how he really

made to like the flavour of Ladies finger and Brinjal. But however, there was no one to exchange my food with- other than Aswathy. But how on earth am I supposed to do it when she is not interested in talking with me about something other than the screwed subject Chemistry? What could be the reason for the silence? I thought. May be on the fear that too much speaking would erase some memory and impact negatively on the exam. Or, as I said earlier, can it be the same reason for the silence of both of us? I mean, what if she too thinks I'm more than a friend to her.

After 10 minutes or more my mom joined us on the room that we opted to make our lunch box weightless. Meanwhile she had met one of her old friend there. I don't clearly remember what's her name. But I can remember her daughter's name. It was Sneha I think. However talking with an old friend and sharing the experiences from the moment they parted is a perfect time-killer for a women. I expected Sangeetha madam to come with my mom. But my mom informed us that she had gone for shop some books. Books are a weakness for her. I'd seen her table in staff room many times that contained contained tall piles of books. Most of it has no real connection with physics or any other science subject. Me too is a lover of books. Especially detective mystery type novels had found place on the top of my love list. But the next hour added one more thing to the list- The most important thing.

We both completed our lunch nearly half an hour before the next exam. It had been really hard for me to study anything for the next one hour after the lunch. Even if I try on my maximum I could understand hardly anything and that surely will lead me to the vast silent ocean of sleep. I think this laziness is common for every human being. Me and Aswathy weren't different species. So I didn't take the risk of falling into sleep only minutes before a national level exam, while Aswathy just went through the chapters very quickly and stopped her brain-stuffing work. Then it was my job to find something interesting to spend the anxious pre-30 minutes of exam without much anxiety. I was dying to go for a walk outside and- of course, as every boy wishes- to take her with me. And then the 15W incandescent bulb lighted inside my brain. Ice cream is the perfect reason to go out on an unevenly hot day like that one. So I simply introduced my idea to my mother.

“Mom, I'll be back in 5 minutes. I want to taste an ice cream.” I said as I took off my bottom from the damn wooden bench which had kindly accepted the heat of my body.

“Ice cream? What made you think about an ice cream? It's an exam starting in 30 minutes.” she said looking horribly at me as though she had seen a Martian.

“It's just 5 minutes, this is really hot here. Just an ice cream.”

“But what if...”

“Oh, leave it mom. I'll not be disqualified for eating an ice cream. Please.”

“Okay. Well...take Aswathy with you and buy one for her also- if she have no problem.”

That really made my job lots more easier. The thing I was trying to getting at had itself came to me, through my mother's tongue. Love you ma. I was sure that she will not bother to refuse this offer on that unbearably hot day if there wasn't an examination going on. But I'd to make sure that she had no problem. What if the Chemistry crap had really affected her Biology?

By god's grace she was willing to come with me and didn't want to miss an ice cream.

“Should I bring you one?” I asked my mom while reducing the cash of two ice creams from my mother's leather purse.

“Oh no. I'm not in a mood to eat ice cream. You go on. Remember, not more than 5 minutes.”

“That's the deal mom.” I said and went out drawing Aswathy with me with an invisible rope.

That was that. The crucial moment of that day was coming near and near. As I walked towards the over crowded cool drinks shop I didn't had the faintest idea about what was going to happen there and how an ice cream is going to be the reason for something that I had not experienced on my life till that very day.

The sun was shining angrily above our head, nearly 15° West from the zenith. To find a shelter from the excruciating rays, we moved to the-not so cool-shadow of the cool drinks shop's sunshade. From the amount of mass that had been gathered there, it wasn't hard to understand there are no 'quality' cool drinks shop in the 100m radius circle, with the school as the centre.

As I said at the very beginning of the story, the narrow cool drinks shop wasn't enough to carry the mass. The shop owner should've amazed, at the same time happy to see this seen.

(I heard that the shop owner bought a new 100cc bike a month or two after that day. He should've thanked us.)

However the addition of two emaciated bodies didn't affect the amount of mass. I was struggling to find a way into the tasty source of ice cream which was hidden completely by the moving bodies which were covering it like mad flies. It was well sealed in the middle of that damn '*Chakravyuha*'. I'd to play the role of '*Arjun*' myself to reach there and get a lick. '*Krishna*' had said on the epic battle that, 'the aim is important not the path'. But there, the path was dense and I could hardly find mine.

We waited there for a minute or two hoping that the exam which was only less than 30 minutes far would bring every souls back to their books. By god's grace(or exam effect) that two minutes made the atmosphere loose. At last I could see the stained white marble floor of the shop like something more than the tiny scraps of white glaze which was seen in the gap of one's legs.

As the 'last 20 minutes' started to play its role my chance came up at last. But it was far different from my expectation. I thought a cool tasty ice-cream would be romantic on that intolerably hot day. But how on earth it is going to be romantic on that highly disturbed atmosphere? The word romance sounded meaningless. How funny!

"May I buy two Choco-bars?" I asked her as though I already knew what she wanted was Choco-bar. But alas! The response was negative.

"No, not Choco-bar. I'd like to have Vanilla, cone Ice-cream."

"Okay then, two cone ice. Deal." I said as I moved closer to the treasure chest.

"Oh no. You can have a Choco-bar. Don't mind me."

"Its okay. I thought you may like Choco-bar. But..Vanilla is okay. I mean perfect." I said.

Within two minutes the mass of the ice-cream chest decreased a lot and on my both hands, the cool, creamy substance filled inside the orange-brown coloured cone appeared. I felt the smooth and most comfortable coolness on my palms as the deep rooted ice-cream inside the cone had started to suck up the heat which was annoying my hands for a long time.

I moved towards the narrow entrance of the shop where Aswathy was waiting for me expecting a cool piece of ice-cream. Holding mine on the left hand I stretched my right hand

along with the ice-cream which was held in it tightly. Then it happened. Just a few nano seconds before my hands met her smooth lovely fingers. A force from behind made me fall forward. My momentum increased a lot within a fraction of second according to Newton's second law of motion. I turned quickly to take a glance over the source of the force during my flight towards Aswathy.

“What the...?” I started turning my heads away quickly. But words stopped as something prevented me from making the sound 'thud'. And then I found that I was actually paying the cos component of my weight on Aswathy's feeble legs. I was her pitch black eyes, the lips that no longer wore the expression of smile and the close up white row of tooth as though I was looking at her face through a convex lens of magnification 10. The most remarkable thing was that, I could clearly and distinctly see the black mole on her nose even though my eyes were closer than the least distance of distinct vision. I could see her nose tip reddening as it was about to touch mine. Feeling her hot and rhymed breath, a sudden chill wrapped me like a python from the bottom of my foot- even in that sweating heat.

Those were the magical moments of my life. The two seconds that went on just like 2 seconds, but on recollecting feeling longer than two sidereal days. It took no time to understand what were the changes that two seconds brought into me. I can still see her worried eyes just a few inches away from me, glowing like two full moons. And the smile, which was brighter than 100 full moonlit midnight, is truly mind blowing. I could feel the rush of blood through my artery. Adrenaline really came up to chest hight. But my throat blocked it from coming out. It was such a wonderful experience. I could feel the butterflies flying inside my stomach, which were set to free after its ages long wait inside the pupae. Dopamine, nor-epinephrine and all other hormones had started its working on me. My palms got wet with sweat, my pupil dilated, and then I knew that it was hard for me to take my eyes off her face. Her curious staring really made me dumb momentarily. I never knew that I was putting my weight on her body on that hours long 2 seconds. I was feeling like lying half on a smooth invisible cushion. It took really long to me to understand that I was holding a cone with an inverted air column in the shape of cone inside. The ice-cream obeyed the law of inertia and ruined her eye-cooling blue churidar. Screw the laws. By the time I returned my weight into my legs and my centre of gravity between them, I was just realizing- that's how the first love

originates.

“I'm sorry...really really sorry.” I apologised her. Or what can I do else? But however, I felt she was angry with me, but suppressed her anger tightly inside.

“Oh...” she just made a sound of distress. But I was sure that she swallowed some words.

“Oh, my dress! This is..bad.” she said looking despairingly down at the design that the ice-cream made on her dress. In fact I never felt the design was bad. But it was yes-uncomfortable. I really wanted to console her. But something from my inside restricted me from talking. My tongue didn't functioned well. Its the action of Dopamine and Phenylethylamine, I know now. Its the same bio-things that makes you dumb when you are really excited.

I prepared myself to talk with Aswathy overcoming the effect of the overdosed hormones- while she kept on muttering some words again and again without the simplest touch of clarity. But without letting me to bring my excited heart beats rate back to the normal, another sound kicked it off again. It was undoubtedly the sound of the first bell. I glanced quickly over my watch which was still showing 11:38 am. I heard unfriendly noises from her side- cursing me or the examination.

Everything afterwards were all in a rush. I remember leaving the fully filled cone on my left hand along with the empty cone on the right hand to fall freely under gravity. However my 20Rs was stolen by gravity. But I'll not curse it. Because that was the thing that really made me 'fall' in love, and that push from behind. I'll surely thank him if I come to know who was it's owner. But in fact, it is still a mystery.

However running back to the room where we placed our books and everything else after washing off the ice-cream design, my mind wasn't bothered about in the least scale. My mind wasn't bothered About the god-damn Chemistry questions or the complex organic reactions. My mind didn't give the priority to the symptoms of various deceases or the names of various cells. My mind prepared itself to successfully survive the rain of scold that originated from my mother's tongue. No stress or tension of of any kind of exam wasn't there on my eyesight then. All I can see and feel was the mystifying beauty of Aswathy's smile and her Jasmine flavoured smell.

I only got back to the mood of examination only when she disappeared from my eyesight. I told you- She was on the fourth bench and I was on the first. I determinedly forced me not to turn and look back. I had had to focus on the exam. But within 5 minutes I understood that it was pretty hard for me to accomplish. I felt some invisible string acting a toque on my head. When I looked at her, I saw her anxious face and covering the anxiety with the pretty curve of lips when her eyes met mine. Susanth was there of course-right behind the beauty- talking with me with the help of some foolish gestures. But however, he helped me one way or another. That is, every time I got the temptation to turn my head to the distraction point, I quickly tried to imagine the ugly face of Susanth staring at me. It-in fact-blocked me from turning my head at that direction.

I was screwed, damnly screwed in the exam. It was all because of her. But I'll not blame her. My mind itself was the one who defeated me. Going through the questions, I felt a little bit relief on my wise action. The exam was whole damn thing. I never prepared myself for this- simplified the effort- that was a wise move. Even if I've given too much effort on the Organic Chemistry crap, all the effort could be in vein. My mind was still working up on her magical smile that made me a thinking statue. I could see nothing but her beautiful name on every single line of the QP. I could see her pitch black cunning eyes at every place the QP bore the picture of a Benzene ring. I don't really know hoe on earth I could think the screwed Benzene ring is similar to her eyes!

However, I repeated the same action as in the previous exam here. This time little bit more fast since I didn't had the patience to read the whole QP. One or two times between this minutes, my head nearly turned backward breaking the barrier potential- and saw her, all messed up with damn questions. I was waiting to hear the sound of bell from outside-almost impatiently- for the last 1 hour of the exam. When it rang, I was the first one to return the OMR sheet to the invigilator and go out of the high stressed atmosphere of the exam hall. I noticed a rare type of smile on the face of the young and handsome invigilator as I handed oner my answer sheet. Whatever the hell that meant, the exam was actually over. That was the big deal!

I waited there on the veranda expecting her. The adrenaline was rising eventually on every ticking on my slowly moving watch. Every time I saw a shape coming out of the exam

hall, the adrenaline level jumped to the throat and when I realized that was not the one I was looking for, it again came back to normal.

I was really worried about Susanth. If he is the one who is coming outside first, that moron will spoil everything. So I prayed to make the exam tough for him. However, god helped me. Aswathy came out at last, wearing a sad expression on her face. The hormone factory started its functioning at the very moment the light reflected by her body reached my retina. My heart pounded like a drum, palms covered with sweat. I felt the enjoyable nervousness as she moved towards me.

“How was the exam?” she asked me formally.

“Oh..it was...yes..okay.” I struggled for words.

“Oh, was it?! I felt it very difficult.” she said in a surprised tone.

“Did I say the exam was easy? Sorry.. it was never an easy one. Too tough.” I said correcting myself.

“The Ice-cream cheated us. My mind actually went blank after that incident. Forgot everything. I say- everything!”

“Yeah..me too.” I said supporting her. But actually, that sweet piece of ice-cream wasn't making my mind blank. Instead it was filling new eras of colourful thoughts.

“See the 15th question...” Aswathy started showing me the -this time- 15 pages thick QP. But I interpolated her.

“Wait...Aswathy...I've to tell you..er...something.” I said (I really struggled to spell her name correctly.)

“What's it?” she asked.

My heart started to beat faster as another 100V input had added to it. Something from my inside- I don't know actually whether it was my heart or brain- told me.

'Its the moment...Tell her about your love. Expose your mind, your feelings. She must know...' and something like that. It kept on talking, urging me to say the 3 words.

But before I could make a single noise, one creaky damn voice made my mouth shut instantly. The sound was undoubtedly from the hollow mouth of that prat named Susanth. I saw him running towards me when I turned- even though he wasn't running at all. It was like a huge meteor landing rushly on the middle of a beautiful and fragrantful flower garden- I stood

there, beside Aswathy- transfixed at my position at this horrible sight.

“Abhinav, C'mon. I've got some doubts.” He said as he approached me giving a malicious look at Aswathy.

“Doubts on what?” I asked.

“Why? Chemistry. What else?”

“Oh...I think..er..I'm a little bit busy right now. I gotta go with...you know...” I struggled for words.

“Leave that man. This is important. We got to know the correct answer from question number 36 to the very last one.” he said.

'Oh darn! You called Chemistry important? How dare you think its important when something rather important is happening currently?' I said inside my brain but also put a silencer to it.

“Not now Susanth, I don't feel equal to it.” I tried to escape from the loop which was growing tight and tight on every words I spelled.

But there came the twist. Hearing Aswathy's sound I thought it'll be something to help me to scoot from the loop. But actually it really trapped me inside.

“Its okay.” she said: “Never mind me. You help Susanth. I'll wait.” she said.

It was nothing short of piercing a steel blade through my throat. It made me speechless. That was that. He got me at last.

Before we parted Aswathy asked me:

“Abhi, what was it you wanted to tell me?”

I waited for 3 seconds where my 5 GHz bio-processor took away to make the decision, and replied:

“Er...Nothing particularly. Its about the exam.”

“Oh was it?” did I heard a tone of despair there? I don't know. But however she went on talking:

“Then okay Abhi. I'll be with your mom.”

She said giving me (and Susanth) a cool heavenly smile she stalked away.

Susanth was a mine of doubts. Most of which beyond my knowledge. Minutes with him were also hour long. But in a different sense. He made me dumb with his 'high classed'

stupid questions. I cursed him each and every seconds under my smile shaped lips for spoiling my conversation with Aswathy. His doubts were- I think- only intended to show his intense knowledge in Chemistry. The devil did let off me as he showed his best part of his Chemistry knowledge.

After that complete waste of time, while running back to my mom, I saw her- only her, my mom. Aswathy or Sangeetha madam were not there anywhere near. So I queried my mom.

“Where's she? Em..I mean..Aswathy and Sangeetha madam?”

“They left. Just a minute before.”

“But she didn't told me. What was the hurry?” My sound suddenly became lazy and weak.

“Your teacher had to attend some important function. Of course, they waited for you. And what were you doing there?”

I didn't make a reply. I was feeling sorry to myself on losing that golden chance. But however that day played an important role on the story. There's a proverb- 'There are three things that will never come back. A spent arrow, A spoken word and A lost chance.' And most badly I'd lost a chance- the Chemistry lunatic Susanth was the cause.

My mother might've noticed the sudden change in my face expression. So she asked me:

“Was it tough Abhi? The exam was tough. Isn't it? Aswathy told me.”

But I didn't move an inch till I heard another voice which I hated mostly:

“Abhi, another doubt. What is the catalyst in the Rosenmund reaction.?”

I really really HATE CHEMISTRY.....

(to be continued.....)

ARK

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